Modernization of ESI hospitals

*359. SHRI R.K. ANAND:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have plans to modernize ESI hospitals throughout the country;

(b) if so, the budget provision earmarked for this purpose for the year 2003-04; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (c)The ESI Corporation has plans to modernize its hospitals throughout the country. The ESI Corporation has provided Rs. 54.93 crores in the Budget for the year 2003-04 for purchase of modern equipment to upgrade the ESI Hospitals. In addition one existing ESI Hospital in each State is being converted into a Model Hospital with all modern facilities for which Rs. 156.07 crores have been budgetted during 2003-04.

On Demand telephone connections

†*360. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to provide telephones on demand in the country, particularly in rural areas;

(b) whether Government have examined the feasibility of providing technologies having low running cost, minimum maintenance, cheap and reliable in rural and remote areas; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) New Telecom Policy, 1999 already envisages making available telephones on demand in the country including rural areas. This is to be implemented with the help of all the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.